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## THE SOVIET OFFENSIVE

Since the beginning of 1950, the USSR has gradually stepped up and expanded its diplomatic, political, and economic offensive against the West and the cold war has now reached another peak of aggressiveness and militancy.

Soviet objectives have not changed and the tactics now being used differ only in intensity and scope from those employed since the end of World War II. Although the USSR has improved its power position by announcing its possession of atomic secrets, increasing its military and industrial strength, consolidating its control of Eastern Europe, and making spectacular gains in the Far East, there is no indication that the USSR is yet willing to initiate armed conflict with the West. The strengthened Soviet power position, however, does permit the Soviet Union to apply greater pressures than it has in the past and on more fronts simultaneously.

As in the past, the present Soviet offensive is characterized by violence, subversion, unfounded accusations, and defiant, belligerent propaganda. Each time since the end of World War II that the Soviet Union has unleashed an intensive campaign of this kind, its effect has been to spur the Western Powers to greater defensive efforts.

Despite the results of these campaigns in the past, Communist doctrine and the very nature of the Soviet system tend to commit the Soviet leaders to achieve their ends through aggressive, militant means. Violence and subversion are an integral part of the Communist revolutionary technique and are naturally accompanied by a vigorous diplomatic offensive. Moreover, Soviet leaders consider it necessary to maintain the morale of

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Communists at home and abroad by demonstrating the power of the Soviet Union. Closely allied with this need, the Kremlin may feel that only by attacking and vilifying the West can it justify the rigid controls it maintains on the Soviet and Satellite people and prepare them psychologically for war. It seems likely, therefore, that the Soviet Union will continue its tactics of aggressive arrogance for some time, the intensity of the effort growing in proportion to increases in Soviet strength and concentrating on those issues and areas where Western strength is weakest.

**Baltic Plane** The current Soviet offensive reached its peak of militancy with the recent aircraft incident in the Baltic. In addition to attempting to prove to the world that the Soviet Union can be neither imposed upon nor intimidated, the USSR has sought to emphasize the military significance of the flight, thus playing upon popular war fears and lending weight to peace appeals. Moreover, in decorating the Soviet pilots who presumably participated, Moscow was, in effect, pointing with pride to the ability of Soviet defensive aviation to protect the homeland from US strategic air power. Finally, the plane incident has been used to convince the Soviet and Satellite peoples that Western aggression is not merely a figment of Kremlin imagination.

**Other Aspects** Soviet self-assurance is apparent in other East-West issues. Soviet defiance of the UN continues. Western missions are being subjected to increased insult and intimidation throughout the Soviet orbit. The tone of Soviet propaganda is growing steadily more provocative, and Communist parties outside the Soviet orbit show a mounting militancy. Concurrently with these aggressive moves, Moscow is probing the defenses of the opposition on a number of fronts. It is testing the degree of Western determination to remain in Berlin; it is agitating, through diplomacy and propaganda, the questions of Trieste and the Turkish Straits; and its support of the Communist movements of Asia is becoming more open and more direct.

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